

PRESS RELEASE
GENERAL REASSESSMENT
COUNTY OF CULPEPER

Immediate Release

Terry L. Yowell, Commissioner of the Revenue for the County of Culpeper, announced that change of assessment notices will be mailed to all property owners by February 14th and they should begin receiving general reassessment notices stating the new assessed value of their property later the next week. Mike Didawick, Project Manager for Blue Ridge Mass Appraisal Company states, "We finished the field appraisal of all property in Culpeper in early January. The last several weeks have been used to complete the review of outstanding building permits, valuing newly created parcels since the job began and testing the files for accuracy. The new values are effective January 1, 2003."

The Reassessment Notice will list the proposed land and building values for each property as well as the total of the two values and the previous assessment. The Notice will also include the telephone number to call if the property owner has questions regarding the assessment or wishes to make an appointment to meet with the Assessors to discuss the assessment. Also included with the notice is an informational insert further explaining the reassessment process and other County real estate programs. Property owners have until March 7th 2003 to call and make an appointment to meet with the Assessors. The phone number is (540) 825-5315. Reassessment hearings will be held at 604 S. Main Street, Suite 108 (rear entrance) in Culpeper, Virginia. An appeal made after the March 7th deadline will be held for the Board of Equalization which will convene about a month after the reassessment hearings are complete. Citizens wishing to meet with the Board of Equalization have until May 1, 2003 to file an appeal with them.

The values listed on the reassessment notice are the property's Fair Market Value. If property is enrolled in the Land Use Program, the use values will not be listed on the reassessment notice. The land use valuation is assessed by the Commissioner of the Revenue's office.

The Assessors will commence meeting with property owners to discuss the proposed assessments. The purpose of the appeal process is to give property owners the opportunity to explain any defects or problems with their property the appraiser may not have observed when the property was inspected. It is also a good opportunity for the owner to review the information used in determining the property's assessed value and make certain of its accuracy. Property owners may review their assessment data online at www.vamanet.com. "We find by providing prior access, property owners are more aware of the assessment process and can determine if their property is equitably assessed. The Vamanet web site is maintained by our company and is used by other localities to provide assessment information to the public."

Some property owners may prefer to appeal their assessment by letter. This is acceptable and each written appeal will be fully reviewed by the Assessors. Mr. Didawick states the appeal process will take several weeks to complete. After the hearings are over, every property assessment appealed will initiate a letter to the owner stating the Board of Assessors' decision.

Preliminary valuation totals indicate an approximate 40% average increase in taxable property since the last general reassessment five years ago. Didawick states, "This is only an overall average and many properties will experience greater increases. This does not mean all types of properties and areas of the County increase in value at the same pace. A major part of our job is to determine Fair Market Value, but it is just as important to ensure equity in assessments between similar properties."

NOTE TO MEDIA: If questions, please call Mike Didawick (540) 665-0375